



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

September 15, 2010

Mr. John Ferguson
Assistant General Counsel
Texas Department of Public Safety
P.O. Box 4087
Austin, Texas 78773-0001

OR2010-13948

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 394187 (ORA # 10-1488).

The Texas Department of Public Safety (the "department") received a request for information pertaining to a specified accident. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note the submitted information contains a CR-3 accident report form completed pursuant to chapter 550 of the Transportation Code. *See* Transp. Code § 550.064 (officer's accident report). Section 550.065(b) states that, except as provided by subsection (c), accident reports are privileged and confidential. Section 550.065(c)(4) provides for the release of accident reports to a person who provides two of the following three pieces of information: (1) the date of the accident; (2) the name of any person involved in the accident; and (3) the specific location of the accident. *Id.* § 550.065(c)(4). In this instance, the requestor has provided the department with all three requisite pieces of information specified by the statute. Although you contend the CR-3 accident report form is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code, we note the exceptions found in the Act generally do not apply to information made public by other statutes. *See* Open Records Decision No. 525 (1989) (statutory predecessor). Accordingly, the department

must release the submitted CR-3 accident report form in its entirety pursuant to section 550.065(c)(4) of the Transportation Code.

We now address your argument under section 552.108 of the Government Code for the remaining submitted information. Section 552.108 of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.108 (a)(1). A governmental body that claims an exception to disclosure under section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why this exception is applicable to the information at issue. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). We note that the submitted information includes a statutory warning. Because a copy of this document, which we have marked, has been provided to the arrestee, we find that its release will not interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(1). Therefore, the department may not withhold the marked statutory warning under section 552.108(a)(1). You state the remaining information pertains to an ongoing criminal case. Based on your representations and our review, we conclude that section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the remaining information. *See Houston Chronicle Publ’g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref’d n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases).

Section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov’t Code § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-87; Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Accordingly, with the exception of the basic information, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

We note the statutory warning contains information that is subject to section 552.130 of the Government Code.¹ Section 552.130 provides that information relating to a motor vehicle operator’s license or driver’s license issued by a Texas agency is excepted from public release. Gov’t Code § 552.130(a)(1). Upon review, we find the department must withhold the Texas driver’s license number we have marked in the statutory warning under section 552.130 of the Government Code.²

¹The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

²We note this office recently issued Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009), a previous determination to all governmental bodies authorizing them to withhold ten categories of information, including Texas driver’s license numbers under section 552.130 of the Government Code, without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision.

In summary, the department must release the submitted CR-3 accident report form in its entirety pursuant to section 550.065 of the Transportation Code. With the exception of the statutory warning and basic information, the department may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The department must withhold the Texas driver's license number we have marked in the statutory warning under section 552.130 of the Government Code; the remaining information in the statutory warning must be released.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php, or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Amy L.S. Shipp
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

ALS/tp

Ref: ID# 394187

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)